

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

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CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10

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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4931

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

C O N F I D E N T I A L DUBLIN 1086

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT

SUBJ: LYNCH CONSIDERS RESIGNING OVER LITTLEJOHN CONFUSION

REF: DUBLIN 1073

1. DUBLIN MEDIA LATE AUGUST 14 REPORT FOLLOWING STATEMENT FROM EX-PM LYNCH: "MY LOSS OF MEMORY CERTAINLY WAS THE CAUSE OF CONFUSION FOR THE LAST WEEK OR SO. I REGARD IT AS SERIOUS IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND I WILL, THEREFORE, HAVE TO CONSIDER MY CONTINUED LEADERSHIP OF THE OPPOSITION PARTY." BACKGROUND OF "CONFUSION" WAS REPORTED IN OUR 1073 EARLIER TODAY. LYNCH AND HIS EX-ATTORNEY GENERAL HAD DENIED GOI CLAIMS THAT THEY HAD PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF LITTLEJOHN CASE. THEN, ON AUGUST 13, AFTER FONOFF PERMSEC MCANN REFRESHED HIS MEMORY, LYNCH HAD TO MAKE PUBLIC ADMISSION THAT HE HAD FORGOTTEN SENSITIVE INFO GIVEN TO HIM IN JANUARY. INCIDENT HIGHLY EMBARRASSING AND REFLECTED BADLY ON ORGANIZATION OF LYNCH'S PARTY.

2. AMBASSADOR AND DCM HAPPENED TO BE LUNCHING IN SAME CLUB AS FONMIN FITZGERALD AND MCCANN. MCCANN, WHO HAS PERSONAL FRIENDSHIP WITH LYNCH, LOOKED PALE AND DEPRESSED. FITZGERALD MADE POINT OF COMING TO AMB'S TABLE AND ASKING IF AMB HAD HEARD THE NEWS OF LYNCH'S POSSIBLE RESIGNATION. FONMIN HAD BEEN TALKING WITH
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LYNCH ON PHONE AND HAD APPARENTLY EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER PROBLEMS

THAT HAD BEEN CREATED--UNINTENTIONALLY--FOR OPPOSITION LEADER. FITZGERALD SEEMED GENUINELY DISTRESSED, AND WE THINK HE WANTED US TO KNOW THAT HE HAD NO WISH TO BRING DOWN FIANNA FAIL'S MOST RESPONSIBLE, PEACEABLE, SENIOR FIGURE. WE CAN WELL UNDERSTAND HIS DISTRESS. "IRISH TIMES" HAS ACCUSED GOI OF SETTING TRAP INTO WHICH LYNCH BLUNDERED. THIS IS ARGUABLE, BUT FITZGERALD WOULD CERTAINLY NOT RELISH ANY SUSPICION THAT HE ENGINEERED DESTRUCTION OF THE CURRENT BIPARTISAN NI POLICY.

3. AFFAIRS IS COMPLICATED BY FACT THAT LYNCH AND MANY OTHER SENIOR POLITICIANS ARE ON HOLIDAY FAR FROM DUBLIN. LYNCH IS HARD TO REACH EVEN BY TELEPHONE, AND, IN BEST IRISH TRADITION, HE APPARENTLY PLANS TO CONTINUE HIS VACATION.

4. WHILE LYNCH'S THREAT MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, HIS REAL INTENTIONS ARE NOT CLEAR IN DUBLIN. HE COULD BE SIMPLY ASKING FOR VOTE OF CONFIDENCE FROM HIS PARTY. ON AT LEAST ONE RECENT OCCASION, HOWEVER, HE IS REPORTED TO HAVE TOLD A FRIEND THAT HE WAS DISGUSTED WITH HIS PARTY AND WONDERED IF IT WAS WORTH THE EFFORT REQUIRED TO LEAD IT. HE COULD BE LOOKING FOR AN EXCUSE TO STEP OUT OF A HARD, ILL-PAID TASK.

5. IN ANY CASE, HOWEVER, THIS ALL SEEMS A MASSIVE OVER-REACTION TO A SPY CASE THAT HAS NOT SO FAR BEEN SHOWN TO BE ANY MORE THAN AN EMBARRASSMENT. IF LYNCH REALLY HAS IDEAS OF RESIGNING, LITTLEJOHN SCANDAL WILL HAVE DONE SERIOUS DAMAGE. PROBABLE CONTENDERS FOR FIANNA FAIL LEADERSHIP WOULD BE HAUGHEY, COLLEY, AND PERHAPS HILLERY. PARTY'S LATENT REPUBLICANISM MIGHT BE BROUGHT MUCH CLOSER TO THE SURFACE.
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